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[www.Desireealliance.org](http://www.Desireealliance.org)

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House Health and Human Services

RI H5250

Desiree Alliance is a national coalition of current and former sex workers working together with supporting networks for an improved understanding of sexual policies and its human, social and political impacts of criminalization's surrounding sex work. Our priorities are building local, regional, and national leadership to constructively advocate sex workers' human, health, labor, and civil rights. We commit ourselves to the tenets of human rights and base our foundations upon equality, empowerment, and agency, to bring those voices into constructive and productive leadership roles in the sex worker rights movements and umbrella issues unique to sex workers. We advocate for the full anti-criminalization of sex work.

We are strongly supporting Rhode Island H5250 to examine the impacts of criminalization and law enforcement interactions with marginalized and disenfranchised populations. Our support for this study is for many reasons that pertain to the safety and well-being of sex workers who have little or no recourse to access adequate resources and law enforcement assistance. We feel the outcome with such a diverse committee of those directly impacted has enormous benefits that situates itself in the many areas of safety, public health, crime reductions, criminal justice systems, and strained budget deficits.

Providing sex workers with community resources or law enforcement assistance in a positive manner, allows the de-escalation of violence, vice, and provides the safety net sex workers need to alleviate violence against them such as rape and/or sexual assaults, robbery, or non-protection of those designed to protect them, such as law enforcements, who many times are the perpetrators of such misuse of authority. Looking at the New Zealand's Prostitution Reform Act (PRA) 2003, statistics have shown that crime reduction, transmissions of HIV (and other blood-borne infections), public health crisis, urban crime, sex trafficking, criminal justice and fiscal

budget strains, etc., have been drastically reduced with this model. This model has been successful for over a decade and continues to thrive under intelligent management. Your citation of Rhode Island's 2017 impact study by Baylor University and UCLA, on the effects of decriminalization shows positive results in public health and safety (16 WHEREAS, A 2017 study, conducted by Baylor University's Scott Cunningham and 17 Manisha Shah of the University of California Los Angeles, published in the Review of Economic 18 Studies found that during 2003 through 2009, while indoor prostitution was still decriminalized in 19 Rhode Island, the number of rapes diminished by 31 percent and the statewide incidence of LC000038 - Page 2 of 4 1 gonorrhea among women diminished by 39 percent; now, therefore be it").

We find the enmeshment of sex work and trafficking extremely problematic. No statistics put forth by government agencies have proven Rhode Island to be a problem area for sex trafficking (<https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/additional-data-collections/human-trafficking>). Although we acknowledge human, labor, and sex trafficking exists under capitalism, we feel enacting laws upon existing laws only expands the consumption for underground labor forces that ultimately hinder and defeat the purpose of the laws designed to aid victims of trafficking. These deterrence's do not mitigate or alleviate circumstances of sex trafficking, and only exacerbates the installation of fear and retributions of dangerous retaliations put upon by the government itself.

We urge this committee to listen carefully to those who have been affected by the criminalization of prostitution. Our experiences and research establish us as experts in our narratives and what is best for our communities to be healthy and thriving. The benefits far outweigh the rhetoric of criminalization through criminal justice systems.

Sincerely,

Cristine Sardina BWS, MSJ  
Director – Desiree Alliance  
[director@desireealliance.org](mailto:director@desireealliance.org)